



Information for Social Change

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Issue Editors: Dr Paul Catherall and Martyn Lowe



Information for Social Change is an activist collective that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal, Information for Social Change.
<http://www.libr.org/isc>



About ISC

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The ways by which information is controlled and mediated has a serious influence on the ways people think, how they communicate, what they believe is the "real world", what the limits of the permissible are. This applies equally to information that comes through the channels of the mass media, through our bookshops or through our libraries. But we want to go further than that, documenting also the alternatives to this control, the radical and progressive channels by which truly unfettered, unmediated ideas may circulate. And further still: to encourage information workers to come together, to share ideas, to foster these alternatives – whether we are publishers, librarians, booksellers, communication workers or distributors. Whoever you are, if you are in sympathy with us, join us.

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Introduction

The current issue of Information for Social Change arrives at a time of ongoing uncertainty for society, information and education, with nationalistic debate prevailing before social discourse on inequality, poverty and socio-economic issues. Commentary on the 'Post-18 Education and Funding/ Augar Report' reflects the contemporary context for young people's services, suggesting that an opportunity to address the urgent challenges of resourcing for young people in the UK remains subject to ongoing neglect and deprecation by a neoliberal political consensus. The articles also address contemporary issues such as increasing recognition of the need for accessibility in the domain of the Internet/ digital media and critical coverage of the colonial context of Library classification systems.

Topical commentary includes issues for management of anti-social behaviours and shared spaces in Libraries, vegan resources in literature and the WWW and scholarly/ literature sources via major open access portals and repositories.

The issue also outlines work to provide back-issues of ISC and precursor journals from which ISC originated, including archiving of these resources and dissemination of ISC content via major search engines and platforms.



Principal Contributors

Also see: <http://libr.org/isc/isc-editorial-board/>

Martyn Lowe is a member of the Information for Social Change Editorial Board and has been a founder/ involved in a wide range of pacifist and library activist movements since the 1970s. You can read more about Martyn on his ISC profile (see above link) or his blog <http://www.theproject.me.uk/>

Dr Paul Catherall is a member of the Information for Social Change Editorial Board and is a Librarian working in the Higher Education sector, he has been involved with Information for Social Change, Career Development Group Wales and various progressive blogs for several years. Paul has been an active trade unionist with UNISON and UCU.

John Pateman has worked in public libraries for 40 years in a number of different roles ranging from Library Assistant to Chief Librarian. John was Chief Librarian of three library systems in the UK: Hackney, a diverse inner London borough; Merton, a multicultural London suburb; and Lincolnshire, a large rural county. John is currently Chief Librarian and Chief Executive Officer at Thunder Bay Public Library. John was part of the research team which produced *Open to All? The Public Library and Social Exclusion (2000)*, which informed the Working Together Project (2004-2008) in Canada. John is the author of *Developing a Needs Based Library Service (2003)*, *Public Libraries and Social Justice (2010, with John Vincent)* and *Developing Community-Led Public Libraries (2013, with Ken Williment)*. His latest publication is *Managing Cultural Change in Public Libraries (2018, with Joe Pateman)*. John writes a column – 'Open to All?' - for *Open Shelf*, the OLA online journal, which explores barriers to library use and how to reduce or remove them. John is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and he received the National Culture Award from the Cuban government for his work in support of Cuban libraries. John was a founding member of Information for Social Change and the Cuban Libraries Solidarity Campaign. He is a member of the CFLA-FCAB Indigenous Matters Committee and the Progressive Librarians Guild Co-ordinating Committee.



Update on Information for Social Change Back-Issues and Archiving

ISC has been in existence since the early 1990s and had previously arisen from earlier publications/ zines such as AIR (Alternative Information Record) and Peace News.

During 2018 to 2019 all early back issues of ISC and AIR were obtained and scanned, then provided via the ISC Web site Table of Contents page <http://libr.org/isc/table-of-contents-current-issue/> this included AIR issues from issue 1 (1990).



Dove image selected by Erin Burns

All the ISC issues have also been indexed/ uploaded on the US government-funded Internet Archive site to ensure preservation of ISC's back issues, these can be viewed at <https://archive.org/details/Information-for-Social-Change>

ISC is also now indexed on DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) for wider indexing in major bibliographic databases, these steps have resulted in ISC issues being visible in databases such as EBSCO and Google Scholar.

ISC remains of course, Open Access under a Creative Commons license, the back-issues will therefore be more widely available moving forwards and we hope to ensure wider indexing on major platforms as ISC develops in the future.

The screenshot shows the DOAJ website interface. At the top left is the DOAJ logo and the text 'DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS'. To the right is a 'SUPPORT DOAJ' button. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: Search, Browse Subjects, Apply, News, About, For Publishers, API. The main content area features the journal title 'Information for Social Change' with its ISSN numbers: 1364-694X (Print); 1756-901X (Online). A Creative Commons license icon (CC BY-NC-ND) is displayed with a green checkmark. Two boxes provide detailed information: one for publisher details (Libr.org, United Kingdom) and one for subject categories and keywords (Social Sciences, Information Ethics, etc.). At the bottom, there are sections for 'PUBLICATION CHARGES' (Article Processing Charges: No, Submission Charges: No, Waiver policy for charges? No) and 'EDITORIAL INFORMATION' (Editorial review, Editorial Board, Aims and scope, Instructions for authors, Time From Submission to Publication: 6 weeks).



From Classification to Decolonization

John Pateman

I have worked in public libraries for over 40 years and one of the aspects of working in these institutions of social control that drives me crazy is the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme. This is one of the prime tools of social control because it represents the ideology and worldview of the ruling class. As such it is inherently racist, classist, misogynistic and alien to the real world of most people.

My interest in the limitations of DDC began when I realised what it did to the history and culture of my people, the Romany Gypsies. It effectively erased them from history, which is what the ruling class would like to do in reality if they had the chance. This problem became even more obvious to me when I moved to Canada and discovered what DDC means to the Indigenous Peoples which, in a word, is nothing.

When I started work at Thunder Bay Public Library (TBPL) in north western Ontario in 2012 it was comforting, at first, to see that TBPL used exactly the same DDC scheme as public libraries in the UK. I felt very at home and could almost have been in Bromley, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster, Hackney or Lincolnshire, where I worked before I moved to Canada.

This, in itself, is a problem because DDC formed part of the settler colonial hegemony that was imposed on the Indigenous Peoples. But it was only when I began to more fully understand Indigenous culture that I realised that the DDC did not only ignore this culture, but presented a worldview of knowledge that was completely alien to the Indigenous community.

The DDC scheme makes perfect sense to the white people who use TBPL, but it means little or nothing to our patrons who come from Fort William First Nation and other Indigenous communities. DDC insists that a book can only be classified in one place and takes a linear view of knowledge, whereas the Indigenous world view is more circular

For example, a Euro-centric system will classify First Nations alphabetically: Algonquin, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, etc. vs. an Indigenous system which will classify east-to-west, as the sun rises: Mi'kmaq, Algonquin, Mohawk, etc.

What exactly does it mean to 'decolonize' description? First of all by 'description' I'm referring here to bibliographic description and more specifically to library classification

schemes, subject headings and controlled vocabularies. And, as useful as these systems of organization have been, they have not been particularly kind to many so-called marginalized groups.

In reference to the Library of Congress Subject Headings, the radical cataloguer Sandford Berman once put it this way: 'Western chauvinism permeates the scheme.' As a member of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) Indigenous Matters Committee I set out to explore this idea of 'decolonizing description.'

In an article about providing subject access to indigenous knowledge by Heather Moulaison Sandy and Jenny Bossaller, I remembered reading that our information systems 'fail to provide access to Indigenous or traditional knowledge from the point of view of the people whose ideas are being represented.' If this was the problem then I imagined that the process would be relatively straight forward.

First, identify outdated and potentially offensive terms like the subject heading 'Indians of North America' and then replace it with a more culturally acceptable term like 'Indigenous Peoples.' So that's the path that I initially started out on and, in a certain respect, it's the path that I am still on.

However, as my research progressed, I began to realize that decolonizing description would require more than just deciding which term might be more appropriate than another. It goes much deeper than that. Our Euro-Canadian or Western view of the world is fundamentally different from the way that many Indigenous Peoples relate to the world. I will consider some of these cultural differences and how they might affect our approach to information organization.

In 2000, Leroy Little Bear, a member of the Blood tribe of the Blackfoot Confederacy and a professor at the University of Lethbridge, spoke about these cultural differences in his paper, 'Jagged Worldviews Colliding':

"Culture comprises a society's philosophy about the nature of reality, the values that flow from this philosophy, and the social customs that embody these values. Any individual within a culture is going to have his or her own personal interpretation of the collective cultural code; however, the individual's worldview has its roots in the culture - that is, in the society's shared philosophy, values, and customs. If we are to understand why Aboriginal and Eurocentric worldviews clash, we need to understand how the philosophy, values, and customs of Aboriginal cultures differ from those of Eurocentric cultures."

It's important to understand that your worldview is something that not only shapes the way you think about and perceive the world, it's also something so ingrained and natural to you that you are generally unaware that it affects and colours the way you relate to the world. As University of Manitoba professor Michael Anthony Hart wrote in 2010, worldviews are 'usually unconsciously and uncritically taken for granted as the way things are.'

Library and Information Studies professor, Hope Olson, connected classification schemes to culture in her paper, 'Cultural Discourses of Classification,' saying that 'our notion of classification is a constructed one growing from our cultural heritage.'

Olson identified three 'fundamental characteristics' of Western classification schemes: mutual exclusivity, teleology, and hierarchy. She traces the development of these characteristics back to the philosophy of Aristotle:

"Aristotle is often cited as having developed the origins of classification as we know it. Although he drew on his predecessors to develop the basic notion of classification we still use, he is the one who synthesized their work into something that could be passed through generations."

The predecessors she is referring to included the work of the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Parmenides of Elea who established the concept of binary existence, essentially: 'What is, *is* and What is not, *is not*.' Aristotle combined this idea with Plato's dialectical approach which presents a linear progression of ideas that attempts to resolve two opposing and mutually exclusive views. This teleological method is a 'logical and inescapable line of argument' that leads to truth.

Aristotle, Olson says, then added his idea of a logical syllogism to this dialectical process of reasoning. The classic example of a logical syllogism being: 'All humans are mortal, Socrates is human, therefore, Socrates is mortal.' The syllogism's three levels move from the individual to the universal, or, in other words, it's a logic that provides a 'hierarchical relationship that gives prominence to the universal.'

Let's step aside from these philosophical musings for a moment and consider an example.

For a concept to be mutually exclusive it means there will only be one place for it to appear in a classification scheme. This contributes to the goal of a classification scheme to provide a set of clear, well defined concepts so that it's easier for us to differentiate between them. This also helps foster a consistent application of concepts during the

cataloguing process and hopefully reduces potential confusion for users navigating through the system.

In the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), for example, we have the preferred term 'Indigenous children.' A preferred term means that in LCSH 'Indigenous children' is the term used for 'Aboriginal children' or 'Native children.' Therefore, if you're classifying something that is talking about some aspect of 'Aboriginal children' you would place it exclusively under the heading 'Indigenous children.' Or, if you happened to be looking for resources on 'Native children' the system would prompt you to use the term 'Indigenous children.'

Having only one place for a subject, along with the idea of having a consistent, universal approach to information organization, is a feature of our classification systems. It's how we've organized and accessed things in our libraries for many years.

However, in an article about classification theory and database design, Jeffrey Parsons notes that this view assumes that concepts *can* be both clearly defined and that concepts exist independent of human perception. It's this 'classical' view, he says, that 'has been shown to be inadequate to account for many concepts that have vague or indeterminate boundaries [which can mean that] different people (or the same person at different times) may organize knowledge about things according to a different set of classes or categories.'

Olson also notes the following limitation with this approach of mutual exclusivity:

"In classifications we try to find one place for any given topic so that all works on that topic will be grouped together. However, in trying to establish a universally applicable ordering we fail, because topics can be combined according to an enormous range of criteria and to impose universality we must choose one – even though which one we choose may change over time."

So while Parsons, contends that vague concepts make it difficult for us to draw the necessary firm conceptual boundaries, Olson adds that choosing the most appropriate terms is also difficult because there are many ways that a topic might be perceived by an individual over time. This approach can be dangerous too because, while we end up using many ambiguous terms, we are given the 'mistaken sense that we have snared reality in our definitions.'

That thought is Doris Schoenhoff's from her 1993 book on the challenges of introducing expert systems into Third World countries. Her primary concern, and I'll come back to

this later, was the interface between computers and Indigenous knowledge systems. But here she expands on the problem that emerges when we compare concepts to reality:

“When put up against reality, all our distinctions and definitions begin to slip and slide. Concepts and definitions both facilitate and limit our understanding. As the tension becomes too great between the reality and the conceptualization, we cast a net for new terms, new definitions. Often this is just an exchange of one set of limitations for another.”

This takes me back to my earlier idea that the process of decolonizing description would simply involve the substitution of one term for another. Although this is a good first step, it doesn't change the underlying problem with a system that does not reflect Indigenous worldviews.

A key part of any culture is of course language. Language not only provides us with a means of communication, it also expresses the values of society and codifies how a culture thinks. For example, for some Indigenous Peoples it may be difficult to establish strong boundaries between concepts because their languages embrace a different worldview. Little Bear talks about this:

“The languages of Aboriginal peoples allow for the transcendence of boundaries. For example, the categorizing process in many Aboriginal languages does not make use of the dichotomies either/or, black/white, saint/sinner. There is no animate/inanimate dichotomy. Everything is more or less animate. Consequently, Aboriginal languages allow for talking to trees and rocks, an allowance not accorded in English. If everything is animate, then everything has spirit and knowledge. If everything has spirit and knowledge, then all are like me. If all are like me, then all are my relations.”

This perspective was also expressed by recent Juno Award winner Jeremy Dutcher. Dutcher is a tenor and composer and a member of the Wolastoqiyik Nation. He touched on this perspective in an interview on the CBC radio program *Unreserved*:

“And hidden in those languages is how we are to relate to each other, it's how we are related to the Earth around us. You know for example, you know I might be walking down the street with a non-Indigenous person and they say, 'Oh, look at those trees over there aren't those beautiful?' I would say, 'Yes, abizieg the tree people.' -ieg is actually the suffix in Wolastoqiyik as well, it's the people. So these are my relatives. And I fundamentally treat them differently if I see them as kin than I do if they're just trees, if the life is taken out of them, if they are just inanimate objects. You know we don't have gender in our language structure,

which has a couple of implications, first of all, instead of signifying things by gender like the French would do, or the Italian would do, things are animate or inanimate, alive or not. And, abizieg, those are people, those are our relatives.”

While our culture tends to prefer well defined categories Indigenous worldviews are focussed less on boundaries between concepts and more on an awareness of the totality and the connections that exist between all things as part of the whole.

The linguist and teacher Michael Christie has worked with the Yolngu in the Northern Territory of Australia for a long time. He talks about trying to organize their language hierarchically beginning with the ‘natural’ distinction between plants and animals. He learned that there is no Yolngu word for ‘plant’ or ‘animal.’ In fact, he says:

“There are very few names at all which divide the world up into the sorts of macro categories which English speakers imagine are really real - a difficult fact to account for if we believe that the world is obviously and inherently structured, that hierarchy is a reality independent of human reasoning so obvious to any eye that all languages spoken by intelligent people could reasonably be expected to encode it.”

Imagine an individual entering a library or acting on an information need who is uncertain about how to navigate through the library classification structure. This process will naturally be less challenging for someone who grew up in the culture that generated the classification scheme. But for anyone whose experience lies outside of that society, someone who may not distinguish between the natural categories of ‘plants’ and ‘animals,’ for example, finding an appropriate path may not be so easily accomplished. And, as Olson suggests, the system may even appear to be ‘hostile to those who see the world in a more fluid and less rigid manner.’

Little Bear tapped into this sense of fluidity when he described the ‘constant motion or flux’ that is an inherent part of living on this Earth. He also suggested that we should all have the ‘strength to be tolerant of the beauty of cognitive diversity.’

This idea of the ‘beauty of cognitive diversity’ is very appealing to me. It reminds me of the earlier comment from Jeffrey Parsons about the challenge of conceptual vagueness and how concepts can mean different things to different people, including the same person, at different times. And it also brings me back to David Weinberger’s idea that ‘everything is miscellaneous’ which I will return to in a moment.

In contrast to the Western notion of individualism and linear progress Olson refers us to the ‘circle of being’, considered to be a central metaphor for many First Nation cultures

and one that does not incorporate mutual exclusivity. Instead, Indigenous worldviews are often more *inclusive* as seen, for example, when Little Bear talked about everything having spirit and knowledge or Dutcher's example of recognizing that trees are our relatives. In Olson's description of the 'circle of being' she talked about this kind of integration:

"All people, all plants and animals, all natural phenomena are integral and inseparable elements of the circle of being. The role of each is as a part of the whole rather than as an autonomous individual."

She illustrated this idea using the example of the 'talking circle' which is one way that First Nations communities get together to discuss things. This practice is also a good example of Little Bear's observations on life's fluctuations and cognitive diversity.

Sitting in a circle each person contributes to the discussion speaking one at a time. There is no pre-defined topic list so each speaker can comment on a previous point or introduce a new topic. This can mean that many topics will be discussed at the same time. Unlike the meetings we might be used to, the talking circle generates a much more organic discussion that becomes, as Olson described, 'a weaving of many inseparable strands' rather than a logical sequence of topics to be discussed.

This emphasis on logic, Olson says:

"Is an example of a broader idea that mind is separable from body and reason from emotion. We generally consider 'contradictions, deviations, and overlappings' as failings showing a lack of logic. Logic as the product of a reasoning mind is highly valued in our dominant culture. However, the exclusion of emotion, or, indeed, of what our bodies can tell us, is not a universal cultural characteristic."

Schoenoff also comments on the cultural aspect of logic in her writing:

"Logic in modern Western culture is a specific form of reasoning that is constrained by rules of combination and consistency. It is abstract and is not directly linked to any human activity. No matter how impressive its techniques or implementations, it is culturally biased."

If we can learn to understand that our worldview is not a universal view then we can start considering creating information systems that recognize and accommodate these differences in perspective. Writing as an MLIS student Amanda Stevens expresses our role as information professionals well in her paper, 'A Different Way of Knowing':

“Libraries and information professionals can play an important role in providing resources and expertise in collection, organization, storage and retrieval of Indigenous information if they are willing to challenge prevalent assumptions about knowledge.”

One place to begin is by shifting our thinking away from ‘literary warrant’ as the primary means to seed our classification efforts. Literary warrant is problematic because it is a document based approach based on written knowledge and therefore not necessarily a good fit for oral knowledge traditions. And, because literary warrant draws primarily from resources published in the dominant culture it can, as Sandy and Bossaller correctly point out, also lead to the ‘marginalization of certain cultures.’

In their paper they considered a few other kinds of warrant including ‘user warrant,’ and even more specifically, ‘Indigenous warrant,’ an idea they pulled from the paper, ‘Indigenization of Knowledge Organization at the Xwi7xwa Library,’ written by Ann Doyle, Kim Lawson, and Sarah Dupont. Sandy and Bossaller summarize Indigenous warrant like this:

“Terms and potentially classification structures are derived from the worldview of the Indigenous Peoples themselves, not from the dominant cultures who write about them or who search for information about them.”

Working with Indigenous communities is key to creating a system that supports, represents and respects Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. According to David Weinberger:

“What you really want is a [classification] tree that arranges itself according to your way of thinking, letting you sort first by expertise and then by experience, and then tomorrow lets you just as easily sort first by language and then by cost, location, and expertise. You want a faceted classification system that dynamically constructs a browsable, branching tree that exactly meets your immediate needs.”

The dynamic browsability that Weinberger points to here, and a system that can adjust to your changing information needs, is something that has resonated in my mind for quite some time. Our current library information systems are anything but dynamic. Sure, you’ll find facets to help you fine tune and narrow your catalogue searches, but they are always the same facets drawn from the same flawed and essentially immovable classification system. Our approach could be different. Consider this comment from Sandy and Bossaller:

“The rigidity of information systems, which was necessary in the card catalog and even in electronic surrogates for the card catalog, could be reconsidered in light of both the recognized needs for cultural autonomy for Indigenous People and the flexibility that is granted by newer web technologies, such as linked data.”

Linked data is the perfect tool to serve up ‘miscellaneous’ information in ways that are not only relevant to the needs of the moment but can also present things, as Sandy and Bossaller describe, in a ‘cognitively just way. However, we have a problem. Technology, like classification, is also a cultural product. Schoenhoff described this well when she said that technology has largely been, ‘Conceived in Western universities and laboratories. All technology, in some ways, reorganizes time, work, social attitudes, relationships, and authority around the cultural values of the environment in which the technology was developed. In doing so, it sometimes fragments the community.’

Remember too that this comment was written in 1993 when the internet was very young and social media was years away. From today’s perspective, in spite of the illusion of connectivity, we can see how fragmented our society is becoming. Christie offered the following caution in a paper he wrote in 2004 about Aboriginal knowledge and databases: ‘Databases are not innocent objects. They carry within them particular culturally and historically contingent assumptions about the nature of the world, and the nature of knowledge; what it is, and how it can be preserved and renewed.’

This sounds like a familiar refrain. Linked data is not a database. It provides a much more flexible way of connecting data elements and can perhaps do a better job of capturing the context of information as it is organized and sought. We traditionally think of an interface as something that connects humans to the functions available in a computer. But in the library context our classification schemes act as the interface that connects library users to the information they seek. However, if you are not a member of the dominant culture that interface can become a barrier that frustrates the way that people connect with information. In that sense, perhaps what we really need is a cultural interface. Can linked data be used in this way? More research needs to be done but I believe that the inherent flexibility available in linked data could be used to bring the miscellaneous to everyone and build better and more inclusive information systems.

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Internet Control in World Regions for Information and Education

Dr Paul Catherall

The expansion of online information and educational resources has offered widening access for participation in developing regions. Internet access for developing regions is now characterised by ongoing growth in connectivity and widescale adoption of mobile devices such as smartphones. Poushter (2016, p.5) comments that "...smartphone ownership rates in emerging and developing nations are rising at an extraordinary rate, climbing from a median of 21% in 2013 to 37% in 2015."

Adoption of social network platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and regional services such as the China-based Weibo service (Socialmediaindex.co, 2019) has risen significantly in recent years, with faster rates of social media adoption than developed countries. Poushter (2016, p.5) comments that "... three-quarters or more of internet users in the Middle East (86%), Latin America (82%) and Africa (76%) say they use social networks, compared with 71% in the U.S. and 65% across six European nations."

Aung and Khaing (2015, p.405) also point out the positive economic and social impact of online learning for world regions lacking significant regional educational infrastructure, commenting that E-Learning can have "huge potential for governments struggling to meet a growing demand for education while facing shortage of expert teachers, shortage of update text books and limited teaching materials."

Despite the growth of Internet connectivity across the developing world, the dynamic and interconnected medium of the Internet can also be seen to pose challenges for global citizens and for access to education and information.

At the time of writing (June 2019) the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests has drawn attention to the context of China's pro-democracy movement, but this anniversary has also highlighted state control for online information, including a range of measures within China impacting access to the Internet and related technologies (CNN, 2019). June 4th is known within China as 'Internet maintenance day' with Chinese social media services such as Weibo subject to keyword filtering and overseas services such as CNN becoming temporarily unavailable (GreatFire.org, 2019).

These developments follow similar recent Internet Control evident in world regions such as the Middle East and South East Asia, with long-term restrictions, content/keyword filtering or obstruction of common technologies for secure data transmission. Catherall

(2015) has discussed the increasing dependence of users in developing regions on networked services in context to the increasing trend for Internet Control:

“Given international trends toward increasing WWW restrictions or limitations on personal freedoms experienced in many parts of the world, and corresponding reliance on the WWW and social media such as Twitter and blogging for popular expression, the above tools have become a lifeline for many users in affected regions...” (Catherall, 2015)

Internet Control can be defined as measures imposed on Internet-based systems relating to restriction of access - sometimes for an entire population but potentially for specific groups, filtering of content/terms (by keyword, phrase etc.), surveillance – including monitoring and recording of Internet activity or mass-restriction/closure of network infrastructure (either periodic/ad-hoc or over an extended time frame).

Catherall (2015; 2017) defined the differing forms of Internet Control – including surveillance/filtering via routing of network traffic via a proxy service, restriction of key technologies for secure data transmission such as Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and the role of local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in enforcing these measures for Internet users.

“Internet Control can reflect the use of wide-scale proxies (controlling access via an intermediary service), local Internet Service Provider (ISP) practices or other measures to monitor, control or obstruct secure Internet technologies such as SSL (Secure Socket Layer) and related technologies.” (Catherall, 2017)

The trend for Internet Control has been cited as a potential challenge for access to cultural, information and educational services; Torres (2017) comments on the societal and cultural impact of Internet Control in mainland China, including disparity between regional and global access to current technologies and online services: "...although China has more than 721 million Internet users, the evolution and operation of certain technologies has been foreign to global evolution given government control over the network." (Torres, 2017, p.8).

Catherall (2015; 2017) also outlined technical characteristics or behaviours for Internet Control, including:

- Problems accessing authentication technologies such as SSL (Secure Sockets Layer), which can face issues when accessed using networks where encryption and similar technologies can be obstructed.

- Filtering/blocking – selective obstruction of Internet domain names (e.g. cnn.com), hosts, IP addresses/ranges.
- Kill switch – the facility to enable wide-scale closure of local or external access via key router, data centres/ telecoms infrastructure, often observed during key dates/events.
- Criminalisation of circumvention – imposition of sanctions, financial penalties or criminal charges arising from use of technologies such as VPN (Virtual Private Networking) to bypass Internet Control/surveillance.
- IP blocking – blocking a specific IP address or IP ranges, in relation to national, regional, specific organisations etc.
- DNS blocking – blocking a specific domain name e.g. bbc.co.uk
- Packet/keyword filtering – obstructing IP ‘packets’ on discovery of specific keywords/strings
- Search Engine complicity – e.g. Google’s self-censorship of its China based services in the early 2010s (The Guardian, 2019).
- Major filtering systems – such as Surf Control, Websense (Geers, 2011, p.45) used by countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman to impose state-wide control and surveillance of Internet use.

Subramanian (2011) has suggested nations seeking to impose Internet Control and other restrictive or surveillance related practices may often do so on the premise of ensuring Internet security, for safe personal access to the Internet or moral reasons:

“...Not surprisingly, repressive regimes see the Internet as a threat. Under the guise of protecting their citizens from the negative effects of the Internet (such as pornography and hate speech), they have, and are, actively curbed Internet use by their citizens by adopting various censorship measures and blockades.”

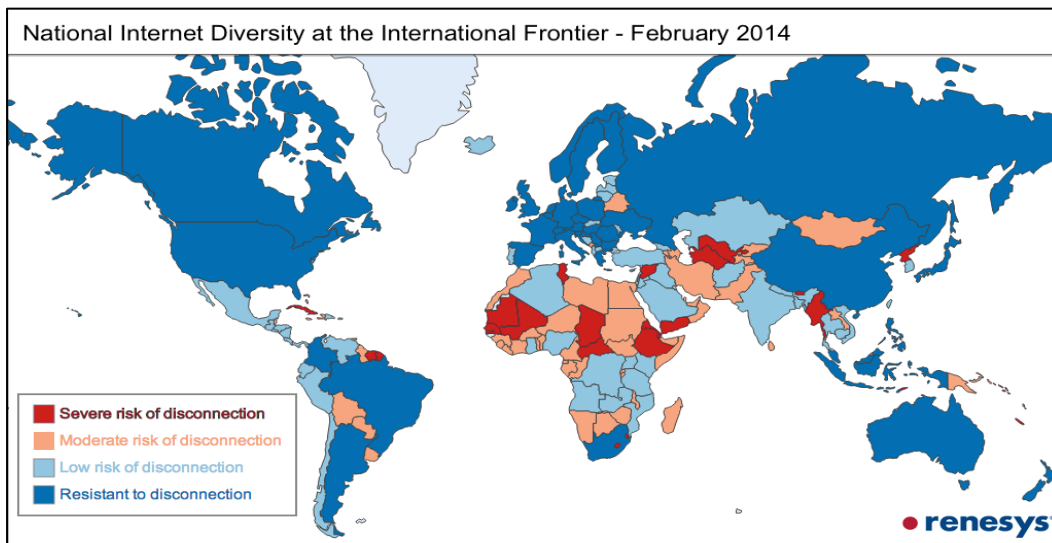
(Subramanian, 2011)

The network infrastructure of United Arab Emirates (UAE) uses state-wide Internet Control measures imposing filtering and related activity (Freedomonthenet, 2018), the following screenshot is taken from a major Internet Service Provider (ISP) based in the UAE, illustrating a response page shown when accessing content which has been filtered or obstructed:



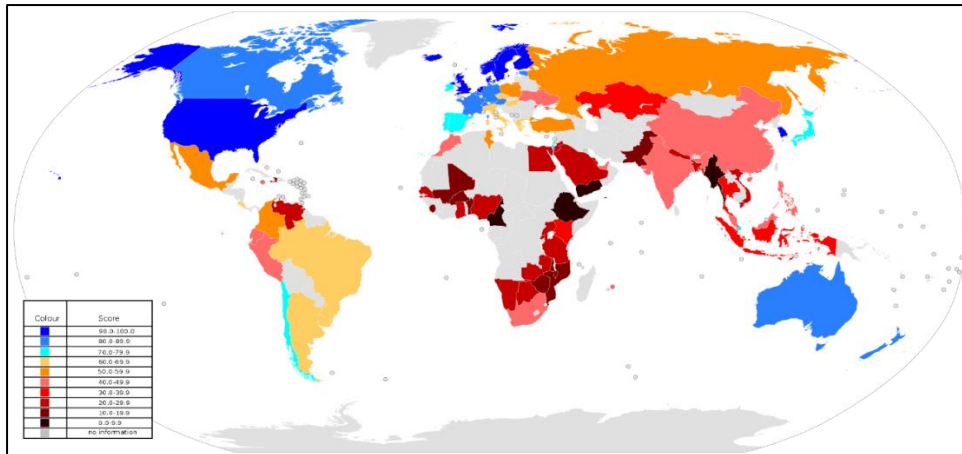
(Mother Jones, 2018)

Some world regions have been acknowledged as vulnerable to potential mass closure of disconnection for Internet connectivity, the following figure illustrates research carried out by Renesys in 2014, indicating the potential mass-closure/ disconnection of Internet access for regions such as Africa and South-East Asia:



(Renesys, 2014)

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) also undertook a survey of 'Open Access Indicators' in 2018, demonstrating a less-open Internet for regions such as South America, West Africa, North/East Africa, Northern Eurasia and Asia:



(W3C, 2018)

Recent historical developments can be seen to offer some insight into Internet Control as exhibited in some world regions, these include –

- Mid 2000s to present: Content filtering in mainland China with access to Google, YouTube and other social media impacted by the 'Great Firewall' or 'Golden Shield' technology (The Guardian, 2018).
- 2007–2010: Thailand blocked over 74,000 Web sites (iLaw, 2018).
- 2011 to present: The Arab Spring (ongoing) has seen related countries impose content filtering, closure of services and "kill switch" events. In 2013 Aleppo, Syria was subject to loss of all Internet access as a result of Syrian government measures alongside wide-scale arrests of bloggers and social rights activists (Pircenter.org, 2018).
- 2006 to present: Debate has arisen on commercialisation of core Internet infrastructure (particularly nations such as Canada, India, USA); the principle of open access to major network infrastructure has been termed 'Net neutrality' (Hahn, R. W. and Wallsten, S., 2006). These proposals would comprise charging for data transmission within the telecommunications industry, potentially creating a two-tier Internet, with faster or more reliable services available to services paying fees for use of core infrastructure.
- 2000s to present: Cuba imposed restrictions on Internet access via mobile devices (Baron and Hall, 2015).
- 2017 to present: UAE's ISPs announced apparent state sanctions/penalties in relation to use of 'false' IP addresses (Gulfnews, 2018).
- 2019 – Zimbabwe's network access was closed during fuel protests.

Internet Control can therefore impose severe barriers or challenges for access to information and education in some world regions. It should also be noted that some

regions/states can impose civil or criminal sanctions both in terms of access to resources, but also for circumvention of Internet Control via technologies such as VPN (Virtual Private Networking). Despite this trend of sanctions/ criminalisation of circumvention, the use of circumvention (or workarounds to Internet Control) remains a key solution for some groups to access many Internet resources. The following comprises a list of potential circumvention options:

- Application for access via government process/ISP – where a written application for wider/non-filtered access to the Internet is sought from a regional or national government agency.
- Access via a university computer (potentially exempt from Internet Control/filtering etc) – similar to above, where access is permitted via a state approved educational facility.
- VPN (Virtual Private Network) software/approaches, via VPN desktop software, Web-based VPNs (running in a Web browser) or use of Proxies/Web-based proxies (i.e. routing an Internet connection via a defined proxy location/host, such as a proxy based in another country). Web browsers offering an internal VPN service include the Opera browser (<http://opera.com>).
- Cloud-based options such as Citrix (Web based and desktop application) and Thin Client applications/devices for remote access to resources such as files/Intranet content.
- Privacy browsers e.g. Epic (<https://www.epicbrowser.com>), TOR (<https://www.torproject.org>) - these provide an encrypted browsing experience, often combining use of proxies, SSL etc.
- Compression for Web data transfer - the configuration of a workstation/device or Web browser for data compression may overcome some Internet Control issues. At the time of writing, Web browsers offering this kind of service include Opera Mini (<https://www.opera.com/mobile>) and Yandex (<https://yandex.com/>), these services may also include some form of proxy, with traffic directed via the browser's data centre. It should be noted that an historically prominent compression service provided by the Opera Web browser appears to have been discontinued by Spring/Summer 2019 (Opera.com, 2019).
- SSH (Secure Shell) popular on Linux based computers/terminals – this adds a layer of encryption for secure data transmission.
- Proxy simulation of ISP/region - not strictly workaround but useful for troubleshooting regional issues remotely, this procedure entails obtaining a proxy IP address (these are commonly supplied by global ISPs and shared for testing purposes e.g. <https://free-proxy-list.net/>) and inputting this into a Web browser's

proxy settings to pass all data via the proxy, simulating a browsing experience in that region.

In summary, Internet Control represents a growing trend for regions such as the Middle East, North and North East Africa, South-East Asia and China and other world regions, representing a major consideration for the delivery of globalised information and education and a serious operational and strategic question for suppliers of networked services.

The issue of Internet Control presents barriers and challenges which are increasingly difficult to overcome via circumvention such as VPN due to criminalisation and sanctions for use of these technologies; in this respect, users' fears and anxieties must be factored in responding to these issues. There is therefore, a need for sensitivity and consideration for these issues when delivering information services or supporting impacted users. For organisations, the issue of Internet Control presents a need for effective cooperation with relevant IT, user support and related services; in the case of Higher Education, this will increasingly be a major strategic consideration for planning trans-national delivery of learning, for delivery of learning with regional partners or for online learning via the medium of the Internet.

It is also imperative to ensure wider understanding of Internet Control issues across stakeholder groups within organisations, where assumptions on trends of expanding connectivity for users and world regions may be present. Additionally, organisations engaged in delivery or support for information or educational resources may need to consider formal methods such as disclaimers, Service Level Agreements or a risk management approach when planning services and infrastructure, to ensure prospective users/clients based in impacted regions are aware of potential challenges and to ensure organisational stakeholders can provide suitable resources and approaches to respond appropriately.

Internet Control arguably remains a poorly understood phenomenon in the wider literature, with poor coverage of support or potential solutions for this ongoing issue.

The increasing prevalence of Internet control can therefore be seen to represent a significant challenge for access to global educational content and digital information - posing challenges for Web-based services, education and information providers for the delivery of networked systems in a dynamic and uncertain climate, where regional Internet regulations and circumstances can change rapidly, sometimes without warning or formal notice.

Note - This article is partly derived from a PhD thesis, see 'Expansion of Remote and Overseas Online Learning' (Catherall, 2017, pp.26-27) and 'Internet Control Trends in World Regions' (Catherall, 2017, pp.77-78).

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New Regulatory Requirements for Web Accessibility and Usability

Dr Paul Catherall

Recent new UK Government regulations for Web accessibility (UK Government, 2019) includes a requirement for implementation of accessibility standards (WCAG 2/ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, AA level) for publicly funded organisations. This regulatory requirement confirms a long-standing onus on public organisations for accessibility of digital content, following previous reference to digital accessibility within legislation and Codes of Practice such as the Equality Act (2010), the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (SEND) 2001, the Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2003 and other official reports since the early 2000s (Catherall, 2007).

The new regulations are entitled 'Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) No. 2 Accessibility Regulations 2018' (Legislation.gov.uk, 2018). The requirement to implement WCAG will be phased, with existing Web sites and mobile applications required to implement changes by September 2020 and new Web sites/apps required to conform by September 2019; a new government agency, The 'Government Digital Service' will monitor the new legislation, this will be enforced by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (Gov.uk, 2019).

Contemporary levels of declared disability (typically students formally stating a disability at enrolment) in the 2017 academic year stood at approximately 44,000 within the UK, an increase of over 50% since the 2010-11 academic year (HEFCE, 2017). The most common disabilities declared according to HEFCE (2017) include learning disabilities such as "dyslexia, dyspraxia or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder" and half of students "had a specific learning difference."

During the early 2000s the Disability Rights Commission (2004) had outlined challenges faced by users with impaired vision or other access issues, pointing out the need for a universal approach to access - incorporating the concept of Web access universality as defined by the US 501 Web Accessibility legislation and by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: "...Disabled people must frequently overcome additional obstacles before they can enjoy the full range of information, services, entertainment and social interaction offered by the Web..." (The Disability Rights Commission, 2004, p.1).

Varonis (2015) indicates that accessibility within the Higher Education sector is now internationally recognised, including the need for accessible adaptations when delivering digital and online learning resources, however, the development of accessible learning materials, systems and related resources can be limited by cost and expertise, commenting that "...it remains a challenge to offer rich multimedia as accessible content when institutional resources are limited." (Varonis, 2015. p.119).

One means of ensuring accessible digital or online resources is seen in the provision of technical standards, such as the World Wide Web Consortium's 'Web Content Accessibility Guidelines' (WCAG), Varonis comments that "(WCAG) 2.0 offers three levels of conformance: A, AA, and AAA..." (Varonis, 2015. p.124).

Alongside technical standards for ensuring accessibility in digital or online content, advocacy via government and regional legislative organisations have also sought to promote and develop accessibility in an ICT and educational technology context, Varonis (2015) comments on United Nations advocacy for accessibility across digital and online systems, to "...enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others..." (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities, 2006 cited in Varonis, 2015. p.120).

Catherall (2007, p.99) comments on the difficulty for educational providers in ensuring Web accessibility in a context of increasing prevalence for enterprise level systems or platforms in contrast to locally developed Web content or platforms within organisations, reflecting a trend to license commercially derived Web platforms rather than development of solutions in-house. In this context, less scope may be available for configuration of systems to ensure compliance with accessibility specifications such as WCAG, commenting that whilst these systems can offer greater usability for administrative purposes, "...web standards among modern information or knowledge management systems delivered via a web-based interface has been mixed and there is still much reliance on the web author or systems developer either to purchase a standards-compliant system or modify system templates to produce a more compliant HTML interface." (Catherall, 2007, p.99).

Inherent in recent definitions of 'accessibility' for digital and Web based systems, resources or media is an expectation for universal design via open standards, alleviating the requirement for parallel or separate versions of media, or for bespoke functionality to accommodate motor, visual, cognitive or other access needs, in this model for accessibility, resources should be viewable and customisable by a range of client applications, Web browsers and software applications, allowing for a single media

resource which can be accessed universally, Catherall (2007, p.101) comments on this emergent approach for accessibility in a digital or Web based context, suggesting that "...usability and accessibility are frequently used interchangeably and there is some debate on how far the two strands should be distinguished at all when implementing standards-based systems... ..regardless of particular needs or disabilities)." (Catherall, 2007. p.101). This view is echoed by Persson et al. (2014, p.507), reflecting on the concept of "design for all", advocated by the European Institute for Design and Disability (EIDD), commenting this organisation has "...defined design for all as 'design for human diversity, social inclusion and equality'." (Persson et al., 2014 p.507). Catherall (2007) outlines how the concepts of universality for accessibility, reflecting wider usability across a range of devices, technologies and applications is an inherent feature of technical specifications such as WCAG, "...an integrated perspective has been adopted by the World Wide Web Consortium – particularly emphasised through the Web Accessibility Initiative or WAI... ..which incorporate aspects of HTML/XHTML compliance, general usability considerations and support for specific forms of disability." (Catherall, 2007. p.101).

The specific nature or characteristics of accessibility compliance include features such as "...page layout and design, legibility of text, appropriate contrast between textual information and background colours and conformance with web standards..." (Catherall, 2007. p.99). Varonis (2015) lists key design elements for Web accessibility, including visual design, to "make content accessible to students with visual needs, including students outputting the screen to a tactile Braille display or non-native readers of the language shown, advocating "... simple design elements can help make visual content accessible to learners with limited vision. Design principles that make content accessible to students reading screen readers benefit everyone, including non-native speakers..." (Varonis, 2015. p.125).

Varonis (2015) further outlines the need for Web accessibility when designing content for individuals having auditory needs, e.g. for use of 'screen readers', software to either read text aloud or for customisation of textual content, suggesting that "design choices can help make auditory content accessible to learners with limited hearing." (Varonis, 2015. p.125), further commenting on design for motor impaired students "so that it is easy to navigate", on the need for consideration of students having cognitive impairments, "which may affect their ability to complete a course successfully" and to consider provision of alternative text or closed-caption textual content, allowing for "...Text or audio description of images and video that allow a learner who cannot see access to all information..." (Varonis, 2015. pp.126-120).

It should perhaps be noted that accessibility for Web based, online or digital content has been subject to critical perspectives, such as Liasidou (2014), suggesting that it can be difficult for policy makers and those advocating accessibility to decide or determine what characteristics constitute equalities or social justice in an educational context, suggesting that whilst "...there is agreement on the centrality of a social justice discourse in bringing about inclusive education reforms, the notion of social justice is ambiguous and contested..." (Liasidou, 2014, p.169), this view is echoed by Persson et al. (2014, p.505), suggesting that formal technical standards still lack coverage in areas such as the ISO (International Standards Organisation) regime, indicating "...there is no consensus on formulating the concept of accessibility in different areas, not even within the ISO standardization community." (Persson et al., 2014 p.505).

Varonis (2015, p.120) also points out wide discrepancies in the implementation of WAI, WCAG and other standards amongst software developers and organisations responsible for creation of Web content, systems and platforms (Varonis, 2015. p.120). Additionally, Persson et al. (2014, p.506) questions wider agreement on the meaning of accessibility in a Web and digital context, suggesting diverse contemporary interpretations on this topic: "...the term accessibility is used in so many different contexts where it may mean different things. Even in the same context, the term may be ambiguous." (Persson et al., 2014 p.506).

In summary, it can be seen that there is an onus on all organisations and Web content providers to ensure the implementation of standards for the provision of accessible content in an equitable and neutral format to ensure content is operable across a range of computer systems and devices, including mobile handsets/tablets. The recent implementation of an official regulation requiring WCAG 2.0 compliance will likely see a rapid improvement in what has arguably been a decline in WAI conformance over recent years – with the advent of off-the-shelf Content Management Systems and other Web-based platforms which have reduced interaction for organisational Web editing/development for accessibility and usability.

For a detailed overview of Web accessibility requirements within the context of WAI and related W3C standards, see Catherall, P. (2007) 'Accessibility issues for Web-based Information Systems'. In: Rikowski, R. (ed.) *Knowledge Management: Practical, Social, Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives*. 1st Edition. Oxford: Chandos Publishing. pp.93-130, ISBN 1843341891 (paperback) / 1843341395 (hardback):

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/293019852_Accessibility_issues_for_web-based_information_systems

Note - This article is partly derived from a PhD thesis, see 'Widening Access and Web Usability' (Catherall, 2017, pp.15-16).

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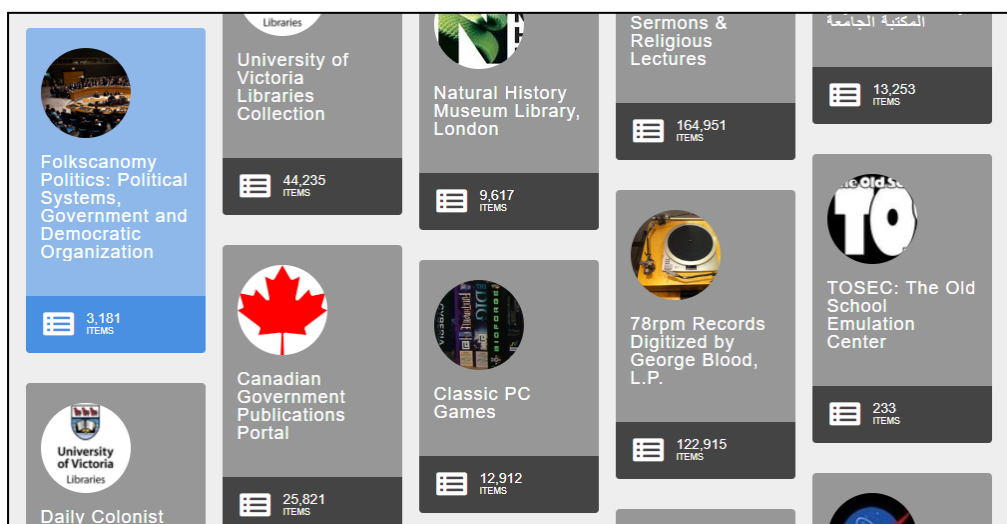
Open Educational and Literary Resources

Dr Paul Catherall

The expansion of the Internet and World Wide Web has seen the development of repository platforms for storage, preservation and dissemination of scholarly and wider textual resources, including multimedia, recordings and artistic works. Key platforms for these purposes include Project Gutenberg (<https://www.gutenberg.org>) established in 1971, the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org>) founded in 1996 and its subsidiary platform Open Library (<https://openlibrary.org>).

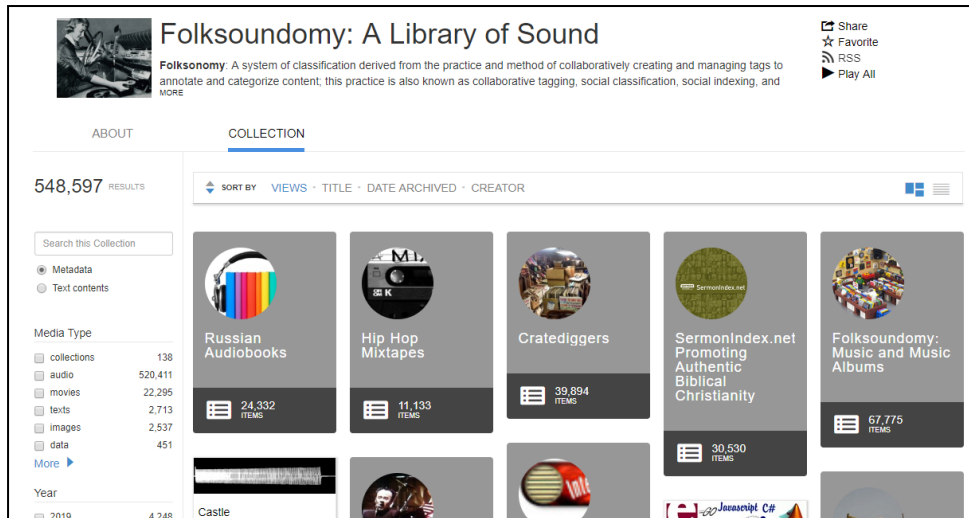
These platforms often provide both on-screen browsing to view/read textual or media content and options to download media in a range of formats to local devices. Additionally, these platforms provide enhanced metadata and historical information for content, allowing for direct browsing and reviewing archival content such as historic or religious texts, ephemeral matter such as flyers and catalogues or digital media such as documentary recordings.

The Internet archive provides a collections-based approach for uploading and browsing content, allowing contributors to define new collections, curate/manage content and add metadata/descriptive information:

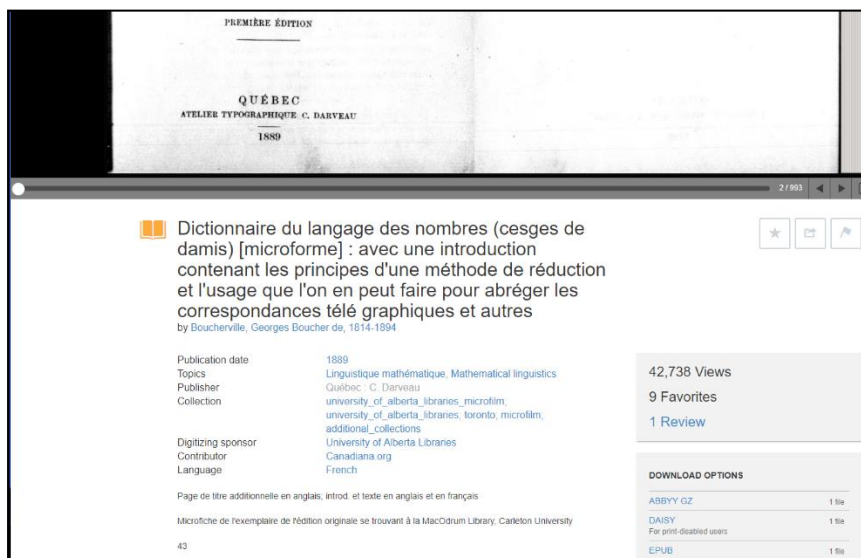


The content matter provided by Internet Archive is varied and includes historic and cultural collections, film and documentaries, voice recordings, music and multimedia (such as historic computing data/files). In the example below we can see a

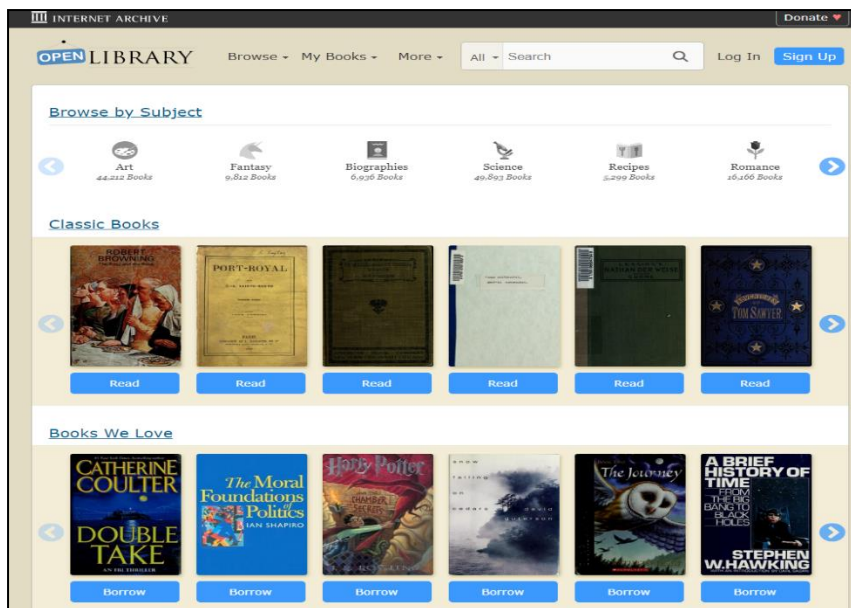
'Folksoundomy' collection, described as "collection of sounds, music and speech derived from the efforts of volunteers to make information as widely available as possible...":



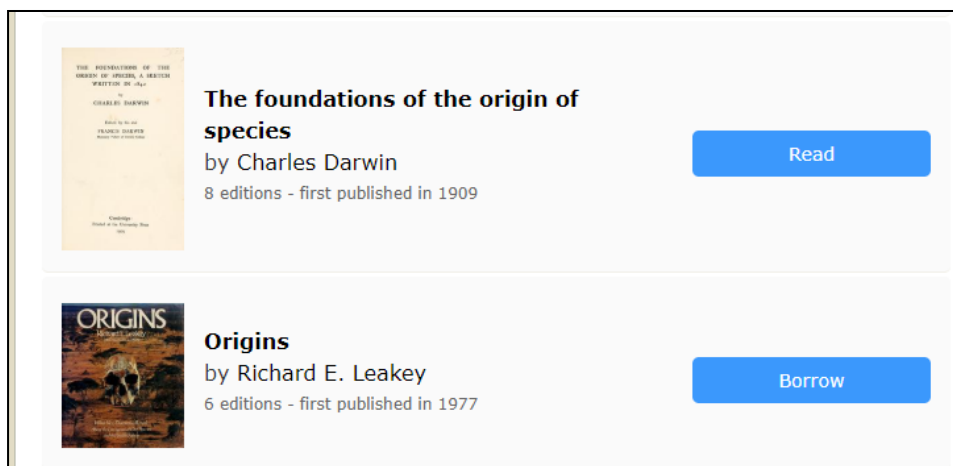
When viewing media such as textual content, film, audio etc. Internet Archive typically allows the user to browse collections, then view selected resources via an on-screen player – providing interactive controls, descriptive metadata and historical information; download options/formats are also typically shown a little way down the page:



The Open Library - part of Internet Archive - can also be searched within Internet Archive (allowing for showing Open Library results within wider results). Open Library provides scanned books uploaded by a large number of world-wide (mainly US based) public Libraries. The Open Library describes itself as "...a catalog... ..from some of the biggest libraries in the world.... We have well over 20 million edition records online, provide access to 1.7 million scanned versions of books, and link to external sources like WorldCat and Amazon when we can...":



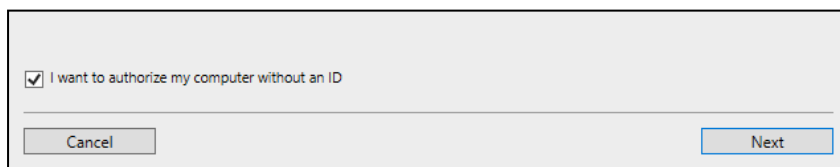
Use of Open Library requires a (free) registration for viewing/borrowing. Some books within Open Library can be read or downloaded immediately, other texts (carrying copyright restrictions) allow the user to check-out the resource for a limited period of time, these can then be viewed online using the on-screen viewer or downloaded in a controlled (Adobe Digital Editions) format, with restrictions such as time expiry:



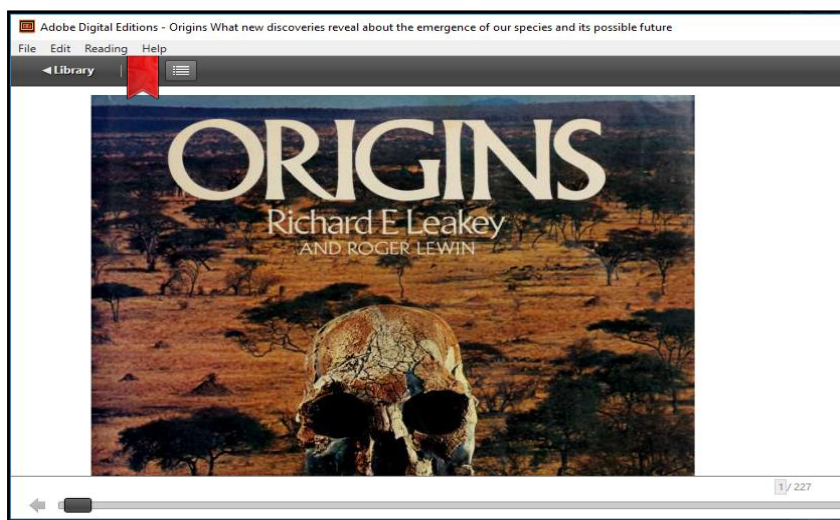
On using the 'borrow' option, the book will open immediately if not currently checked out (otherwise you will need to wait for the book to become available - email notifications will be provided when the text can be loaned); when viewing a book you can access the text on-screen and (if available) download in PDF/ePub format:



On downloading the book (in encrypted PDF or ePub format) you will be prompted to download an ACSM file, usable in the Adobe Digital Editions application – you will be prompted to install this application (<https://www.adobe.com/uk/solutions/ebook/digital-editions/download.html>). Note – when using Adobe Digital Editions for the first time you will be promoted to supply an Adobe ID, this can be bypassed using the 'I want to authorize my computer without an ID':



After selecting/clicking the ACSM file, the book will download to your computer/device (note – the ACSM file downloaded is not itself the book file, but allows a transaction to download the data from Open Library). When the book has downloaded you will be able to navigate the book contents, use an in-text search and other functions within the application (the book will also expire after the loan period):



Benefits of Open Library and the wider Internet Archive includes: access to historical, rare and out-of-copyright texts and access to the scanned shelf collections of public libraries around the world - offering a virtual borrowing facility to access these collections. Books you have read will remain in your personal space for later access, books which have you have selected to loan but not yet become available are also shown in this area.

Project Guttenberg provides over 59,000 E-Books, mainly comprising classic and historical texts (out-of-copyright). The project is hosted by Ibiblio, a US-based university-supported platform for open access resources. No registration is required for viewing/downloading texts.

Project Guttenberg provides a range of 'categories' within the 'bookshelf' area of the site – allowing browsing by theme or genre (with approximately 200 top-level categories):

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For bookshelves in other languages, see:

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- [Français](#)
- [Italiano](#)
- [Portugués](#)

Subcategories

This category has the following 22 subcategories, out of 22 total.

A	▪ Fine arts Bookshelf
▪ Animal	G
C	▪ General Works Bookshelf
▪ Children's Bookshelf	▪ Geography Bookshelf
▪ Classics Bookshelf	H
▪ Countries Bookshelf	▪ History Bookshelf
▪ Crime Bookshelf	L

On accessing a category, texts with their authors are listed, further sub-categories are also shown, followed by a list of related categories:

Butterflies/Moths

- [Bee and Butterfly: A Tale of Two Cousins](#) Madison, Lucy Foster
- [British Butterflies: Figures and Descriptions of Every Native Species](#) Coleman, W. S. (William Stephen)
- [Butterflies and Moths \(British\)](#) Furneaux, William S.
- [Butterflies Worth Knowing](#) Weed, Clarence M.
- [Moths of the Limberlost](#) Stratton-Porter, Gene

Flies

- [The House Fly and How to Suppress It: U. S. Department of Agriculture Farmers' Bulletin No. 1408](#) Bishopp, F. C. (Fred Corry)
- [The Life of the fly: with which are interspersed some chapters of autobiography](#) Fabre, Jean-Henri

See Also

- [Natural History](#)
- [Zoology](#)
- [Animals-Domestic](#)
- [Animals-Wild](#)

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Comment on Review of Post-18 Education and Funding/ Augar Report

Dr Paul Catherall

The current UK Higher Education climate is a fees-based system, with tuition fees of up to £9,250 pa (for UK/EU nationals) chargeable by universities in England and Wales, with interest-bearing loans repayable over 30 years. Additionally, student maintenance is principally funded using a means-tested loan component (both components attract interest which can rise with RPI), with student debt totalling up to £50,025 plus interest on graduation (Which, 2019, Wonkhe.com, 2019).

The Augar report, released in 2019 proposes a reduced Higher Education fee from £9,250 to £7,500 per year, the wider re-introduction of means-tested maintenance grants, reduction of the repayment threshold (at which the fees are repaid by students on entering the workplace) from £25,725 to £23,000 and extension of the repayment period from 30 to 40 years.

The changes are expected to incur the following outcomes (Wonkhe.com, 2019; The Guardian, 2019) –

- Higher Education institutions to face up to £1,9 billion losses in income due to the reduced fee regime (although these losses would not be reflected in Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish institutions, due to differing funding regimes).
- Lower impact of repayments for higher earning, predominantly male graduates, expected to repay loans earlier.
- Wider access to maintenance grants for some students.
- Suggestion of an explicit requirement for parental financial contribution – however this is not well explained, nor explains how students will be funded lacking parental contributions.
- Re-alignment of the HE sector toward STEM subjects (e.g. Science, Medicine, Dentistry) - although this point is not well explained – within a narrative surrounding 'low value' social sciences and arts subjects.
- Greater total repayments for predominantly female graduates due to expected irregular working patterns of this group, partly due to childcare and other caring responsibilities – potentially also impacted by the gender pay gap.
- The revised 40 year repayment period will likely result in greater numbers of lower-earning graduates being able to begin repayments - due to a lower income threshold and longer timescale for possible earning opportunities.

The report raises immediate concerns for the Higher Education sector due to a serious potential loss in their income, but also raises the prospect of a worsening funding burden for some students - particularly for groups such as women (who will be expected to have less regular working patterns and will be less likely to rapidly repay debts) and for lower earners, who will be more likely to incur debt in the future due to the changes to repayment periods and continued use of interest on loans.

These proposals can be seen to perpetuate ongoing social injustice for young people who will continue to face severe debt on graduating, resulting in serious detriment to their future ability to afford rising living costs in the UK, including increasingly unaffordable housing/rent, childcare, energy and other costs.

The proposals appear to benefit only higher earning graduates, including socio-economic groups with better access to elite schools and universities or able to leverage social capital for access to elite internships. The proposals also discuss a re-alignment toward vocational and Further Education, branding liberal arts degrees 'low value'.

This re-alignment away from academic opportunity reflects trends within the neo-liberal political consensus to deprecate state-funded education via measures such as academisation (privatisation of school provision), suspension of school maintenance, deprecation of the curriculum, mass-closure of youth services such as careers centres and libraries and continuing imposition of unreasonable Higher Education costs on young people - thus exacerbating barriers for social mobility and meritocracy.

It remains to be seen if the proposals within this report will be enacted, given the current context of a Conservative leadership contest (June 2019) and political/economic instability surrounding the ongoing planned exit ('Brexit') of the UK from the European Union.

This report does however confirm the ongoing and pervasive assault by the current neoliberal political climate on young peoples' services, educational infrastructure and wider meritocratic legacy of the UK.

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Anti Social Behaviour or Library Shared spaces

Martyn Lowe

Library manager of a London borough library:

“Libraries have an important role in facilitating study. However as you have raised at exam time this can mean libraries are packed out with students leaving little space for others. I think there has to be clear guidelines for what is acceptable in terms of eating and drinking and that these are enforced by staff consistently. Also leaving possessions needs to be discouraged as it unfairly takes away space from other library users.”

Library Byelaws made under Section 19 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 by the Manchester City Council:

“Bags, parcels and all other property left unattended in a library may be removed to a place designated for lost property. Lost property will be retained for a period of three months and then, if the owner cannot be contacted, disposed of.
No person shall consume food or drink in a library other than in an area or at times set aside for such consumption.”



It needs to be Remembered

Martyn Lowe

Some thoughts from a Library User.

Libraries should be open to use by everyone in Society.

For pensioners who never got the chance to attend College or University having joined the work force at 14, 15, or 16, Public libraries are an important part of their continuing self education.

The self education aspect of libraries is especially important while adult education and evening classes continue to be cut.

One in seven adults in the UK are functionally illiterate. So part of the work of librarians and information workers is to provide help to improve this situation.

Eating, drinking coffee, and hugging study tables are a NO NO. This is particularly seen when leaving ones possessions behind, as it prevents others from using the study area.

Library Study tables are shared resources, and should be used, or thought of that way.

Thus students should not get upset if the study desks they have abandoned are used by others.

Lap tops, and the contents of bags, left unattended in libraries may get stolen. It is not the job of library workers to act as security guards.

An abandoned bag may result in it being removed by library staff, or it could result in a bomb scare.

Library workers are not janitors, and should not be left to clean up library users waste.

Thus all libraries should have both plastic bottle and paper recycling bins.



The simple pleasures of a Retired Information worker

Martyn Lowe

The great thing about being retired, and having spent most of my life working in libraries, is that I can pop in to any public library, and know exactly what is going on at the time.

Thus I can tell at a glance what the normal staffing levels are, what kind of problems the front line library staff face each day and just how well run it might be. Now I might not wish to be a part of a library users group, but that does not prevent me from being supportive to those from front line library and information workers who I meet this way.

It also means I can browse for information without the need to first of all consulting the catalogue. But here rests the problem, for I still have to consult the catalogue for some books. This is because some books have been misfiled or wrongly catalogued.

To give just two examples:-

I've often come upon books about Vincent Van Gough under French painting, while in fact he was Dutch.

While looking for books on both Film actors and directors, in some libraries they are to be found on the shelves in author order. That's not good if there are several shelving bays to go through in order find out more about the films of a specific director and those who acted in them.

It is such things as that which drive me gaga.

Be we working or retired, these are issues which need dealing with.

In my retired state I often point out such mistakes in order that they might be rectified.

Oh don't most front line library staff just love me for doing so!

Though I also do something very similar in both Art Galleries and museums when finding there is a mistake in the description labels.

Oh what fun I have!



Vegan Resources

Martyn Lowe

49 Plus One

In my early 20s I only knew one Vegan. There were very few vegetarians during this that period, and I was lucky enough to know rather a number of them. Being vegetarian was and still is very common within pacifist circles.

Over the last couple of years the number of vegans has really grown.

In the same way there are a lot more vegan food options in cafés, restaurants, and in the shops.

While many vegan foods are marked as being approved by the Vegan Society.

This really is a major social revolution.

On the 26th of January I marked 49 years of being Vegetarian by becoming vegan. Next January I will celebrate 49 plus one.

On a number of extinction rebellion demonstration this year many of the speakers have stated that if we want to save the planet, then we should all become vegan.

It is not my intention to write yet another of many articles about why we should all become vegan, but look at the information sources which are now available on the subject.

The Vegan Society

There are now many Vegan recipe books which have been published over the last few years, but one of the first such works is *Vegan Cooking* by Eva Batt.

Eva Batt was a founder of the Vegan society in 1944. During the middle of the 1970s I was in correspondence with her on the issue of nukiller power

The Vegan Society has a lot of very useful information on its website.

It is a good starting point for anyone who wants find out more about the many excellent reasons to become vegan: <https://www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/why-go-vegan>

The website also includes both recipes and a guide to which retailers offer vegan-friendly shoes and boots.

PETA

PETA is an organisation which describes itself thus: -

The 'People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETA) Foundation is a UK-based charity dedicated to establishing and protecting the rights of all animals.

On their website it states: -

'ANIMALS ARE **not** OURS to experiment on, eat, wear, use for entertainment or abuse in any other way.'

Upon the PETA website there is not only a lot of very factual information upon animal exploitation, but a very excellent recipe section too.

There is also a Free Vegan Starter Kit which you can obtain from the following: -
<https://secure.peta.org.uk/page/24237/data/1>

Children's Books

We Don't Eat Animals

This is both the title of a book by Ruby Roth, and her website:
<http://www.wedonteatanimals.com/home>

She has written and illustrated three very excellent children's picture books: -

V for Vegan

Vegan is Love

&

We Don't Eat Animals

Her other work is

Help Yourself Cookbook For Kids

This book has 60 recipes to stay healthy and save the world.

These books are now available in various languages.



Cave (Poem, 2004)

Paul Catherall

Deep, deep underground -
the hoary troll
counts moonstones with a flickering pierce,
casting pale shadows in the glow
of incandescent suns -
slashing the dark with hungry
cadaverous teeth.
A grinning seabird
perched and waiting on a rubble pile
surveys the scene. In his eye
a nebulous sea tolls the hour.
Now, our fiendish companion
hammers out contractible alloys;
his beating sledge
sparks off the anvil ground. A searing rod
emerges sparkling from stagnant
fountain depths. Overhead,
a starless firmament applauds.
Casting pale favours over its abeyance edge,
an ivory smile
gaping at this abysmal slave
petrifies its seasons.

